









## NOTES OF A TOUR FROM MOSCOW TO THE CRIMEA AND ODESSA.

## FIRST LETTER.

(From the Times' Special Correspondent.)

The Russians complain that the books of travel which have been written concerning the vast empire they inhabit abound with misrepresentations and falsehoods, and are deeply imbued with prejudice, ignorance, and conceit. In order to prevent such charges being preferred against the notes made by me during an excursion of nearly three months' duration in the southern part of Russia, I beg at once to state that I do not pretend more than to record what I saw, and that whatever is advanced on hearsay was reported to me by persons of respectability and character, on whom the responsibility of these statements must depend; that I do not venture to offer any philosophical reflections on the habits, institutions, or social condition of the people, or propound any theories concerning the government and administration of the country, but that simply writing what I believe to be true on the evidence of my own eye-sight or hearing, I leave to others the task of drawing such conclusions and deductions as they please. The friends whom I have left behind me in Russia must be well aware that I set out from Moscow without any disposition to regard their countrymen and institutions with an unfavourable eye, and they must not be offended if my impressions are recorded as they were formed, and are expressed with sincerity and candour. These impressions may be erroneous, but, at all events, they are honest, and I must own that I had gone no farther than Moscow I should have had a very different notion of the condition of Russian society from that which I now entertain after a short tour "off the rail." The grand spectacles of the coronation, the glare of the ballroom, the glitter of monster reviews, and all the civilized pomp of Moscow—its French and German shops, its gay equipages, and orderly streets, dazzled and perplexed the judgment. The Russian post-house, the serf villages, the roads, the soldier on the march, the post-cart, the country town, the hotel—these presented another and a very different aspect of Russian life and manners.

One of the objects I had in view in making the journey was to judge, as far as the time and means of observation at my disposal would enable me, of the condition of the country and of the effects of the late war upon the mass of the population; another was to follow the route of the main body of the Russian reinforcements as they approached the Crimea; and a third was to get home as speedily as possible by a new route, which also afforded opportunities of becoming acquainted, superficially indeed, but still to some extent accurately, with the physical aspects and social state of a vast tract which few strangers have occasion to traverse, and still fewer think it worth while to describe. In addition to these motives for undertaking, as it proved, a long and not very agreeable journey, an inducement presented itself, the force of which moved me powerfully, and which I am sure would exercise equal influence with any one who had lived so long with a British army as I had, and who had passed so many months of mingled joy and sorrows in the society of friends whose voices are silent for ever. I wished to revisit our cemeteries and the scattered monuments and resting places of our noble dead, to see with my own eyes that the Russians had kept their promise, and to ascertain the present state of Sebastopol. The prospect of beholding the station on which I had lived for nearly two years with very little interruption, and which was the scene of so many events, to be remembered for ever by all who in the smallest degree participated in them; of going over the old ground once more, of tracing the line of the trenches now fast crumbling away, and peering into the city of the dead and its sunken navies, exercised over me a fascination which, if not strange, is certainly indescribable; and the chance of doing this might, in all probability, never come again.

And so I decided that I should proceed home by the Crimea and Odessa, for we had reason to believe very confidently that we could find steamers plying between the ports of the former province and the latter city, from which three or four routes to England lay open to the choice of the visitor. The "we" is a pleasant reality, and not a newspaper phrase, for I was fortunate enough to find that my two companions during the coronation month at Moscow, were willing and anxious to accompany me to and make the same journey—the one inspired by a desire to revisit the Crimea, the other actuated by the natural wish of a young Englishman to behold the ground which the brilliant valour and the suffering of his countrymen have consecrated to the end of all time. As it would not be possible to procure permission from the police authorities of Moscow for such an expedition, undertaken, as it was, for pleasure, and not business connected with the service of the State, I applied to our Minister, Lord Vodehouse, to move the officers of Government to assist me, and his Lordship, with his usual kindness and courtesy, at once complied with my request, and begged Mr. Tolstoy, adjutant of the Minister of Foreign Affairs, to give me permission to proceed into the Crimea. Mr. Tolstoy, to whom I was personally known, promised to do what was asked for me in a few days after the first application forwarded to the Hon. Julian Fane, First Secretary of our Embassy, with a pair of "sorry horses," for the month, is from £65 to £70, and the driver expects to be paid beside. The common droshky-drivers, a couple and a half an hour, and a rouble for the shortest drive. The price of a bedroom and sitting-room for the month has been about £55, and the most grubby and dingy boarding-houses charged 10 roubles, or about £1 15s. a day, for bed, dinner, and breakfast, without wine or beer. For washing shirts 12 roubles a dozen was asked at the outset, and the price was with difficulty reduced to about 1s. each. The price of a pair of white kid gloves is 5s. 6d. or 6s. There was a fish soup, very excellent indeed, and of a peculiar flavour and richness, served at the Russian restaurant at which we dined the other day which cost 25 roubles, or about four guineas, for three persons, and the same description of soup is sometimes made so extravagantly that it cost £5 or £6 a head!

The common price of champagne is 15s. a bottle, and the quantity the Russian officers consume is very great. In fact, the luxuries of life, which are here regarded almost as necessities, are of enormous cost. The whole price of food was raised very little, so that these excesses must be regarded as extortions for the most part, and as the involuntary contributions which all strangers and travellers are required to pay to the maintenance of trade and commerce when they go to see sights beyond their own country. But what is this roar of distant thunder? Oh, the "ekspidze" (the Russians are obliged to borrow many words from foreign languages to express those things with which civilization has

made them acquainted)—the "ekspidze" is at the door! My two friends and myself got into a carriage, and our English courier got into a huge dicky, or rouble, in front; poor Bellini made us a warm speech in Italian; the driver cracked his whip, and we were immediately sent with our heads into each other's stomachs with a lunge so violent and so sharp that we really should have been justified in thinking the carriage had blown up. But it was nothing; our tarantasse was merely under way, and this was the first roll over the stones. Before we could utter an exclamation, we were pitched violently back with our heads rap against the hard cushions, while the noise, the creaking, the rattling of glass, the screaming of tortured timber, rose high above our cries of distress. Any one who has ever been buffeted by a gale head to wind in a short sea, and in a short elderly steamer, will be able to form some notion of the motion of our tarantasse over the ill-paved streets of Moscow and across the huge blocks of stone of the *chassees*. The lights in the shops danced like wildfire before our eyes; and as the champagne lamps which illuminate the streets shone in through the ports of our driving-lash-side the features of each seemed to the other hideously distorted, now pulled out to an unnatural length, and in an instant flattened, and then extended to twice their breadth. No one had the moral courage to say it. Each was waiting for the other to pronounce the fatal word, but it is my belief that if any of the party had said, "I really can't stand this: we must stop!" the expedition would have been at an end, to the great joy at that time of the whole society. It was at 6.30 p.m., in the dark of a cold, wet, and blowing night, that the tarantasse weighed and stood for Tula, driving through the streets of Moscow like a two-decker rushing through the Downs for horse-moorings in a winter breeze. For nearly half an hour the noise, the clatter, the pitching was most annoying and sickening, for so long were we in working through the enormous city, which revealed itself to us for the last time shining with rain, and at last died out in a dim glow which lighted up the heavens far and wide. Then we got off the pavement, and the motion was easier, the perch began to play a little, and we settled down more readily into our places. Out of the windows we could see nothing; all was dark. The rocking and shaking had set us all into a hazy unpleasant sleep, which was broken by a sudden cessation of sound or motion. We had pulled up at Berliova, our first stage, 17 versts from Moscow. It was 8.15 p.m. The *chassees* had been so far very good, and the pace respectable. The posthouse, a staring white building with a double-headed eagle emblazoned over the door, and a large porch with much unintelligible information engraved thereon, respecting places and distances in black letter of the most ancient type at the side of the entrance, invited us to enter, and in distant apartments we heard Walter battling with the Spirit of Evil, or the postmaster, as we crossed the threshold. The post for four horses had been paid to Tula, a distance of 180 versts. It was not very great—21 roubles silver, and 5 roubles and 46 copecks for turnpikes, for there are said to be turnpikes in Russia, on to Orel. Passing through a long and cheerless room, in which a high-smelling and dingy-looking party of natives were waiting, we entered a smaller room, warmed by a stove and provided with two chairs, and a most uncompromising leather-covered sofa and a card-table, by way of furniture, and in this we remained while the goddess Tobal till the horses were put to, and we rushed forth into darkness once more. The somniferous, or hot-water urn, the charge was about 10d. To the yatschik, or driver, the fee was 30 copecks, or a shilling, for which trifling consideration he performed a humiliating series of genuflections. As the horses were announced Walter came forth, looking flushed and red in the face and guilty in the eyes. We knew he had been telling an awful number of lies on our account; but we forgave him in the most generous manner, as they had not been told to us, and so we set forth on our journey from Berliova.

## BRITISH MINING IN 1856.

(From the Morning Chronicle, January 9th.)

THE development of the mineral resources of England is a subject of considerable interest, nationally as well as individually. To the article of iron alone England owes much of her renown. It has been the great motive power of her prosperity and exalted position among surrounding nations. By means of iron she has achieved greatness in machinery, and the manifold manipulations to which fibrous articles of foreign growth are rendered subservient to the wants of the world. Lead, copper, and tin form important materials in aiding the progress of civilisation. A resume of the progress of British mining during the past year will, therefore form an interesting record of 1856. Mr. J. H. Murchison, in his annual summary just issued, states that while the amount of dividends paid by British mines in 1855 was the largest paid in any one year previous to that time, it exceeded the amount of 1854 by £16,362, while the increase in English mines alone was £20,302 over the previous year, and £121,838 over the average annual amount of the previous ten years, the dividends paid by British mines in 1856 exceed the amount of 1855 by £61,428; and the English mines exceed those of 1855 by £46,839, and the average of the previous ten years, by £189,749. It must be admitted, therefore, he observes, that this branch of national industry is in a sound and satisfactory position, and has progressed in a wonderful manner, either in a state of war or in time of peace. Soon after the conclusion of peace, most of the articles consumed in mining, such as tallow, candles, timber, hemp, cordage, coals, &c., fell in price, and in a great measure counteracted the temporary decline in the value of copper. Taking the eight principal metals, it is found that in 1855 they sold 65,144 tons for £474,877, out of which they divided £202,306, or 42.601 per cent. of the returns; whereas in 1856, the same eight metals sold 71,461 tons for £461,988, out of which they divided £218,556, or 47.312 per cent. of the returns; so that although the average price per ton received for the ores was less, the per centage of profit was greater. At the first sale of copper ores in Cornwall, in January, 1856, the average produce was 7s. and the price 27 2d. 6d. per ton; from that date the price gradually fell till the beginning of July, when ore of a same produce realized only £3 10s. 6d., or a decline of £1 3s. per ton of ore. The price then gradually rose, and at the end of September ore of 7s. produce fetched 26 12s. per ton. During the month of December a very rapid rise took place, and ore of 7s. produce now bring upwards of 48 per ton, showing a rise of about 42 per cent. of ore since the beginning of July, and £1 since January last. Ores of all other produce have of course risen in proportion. It is believed by some persons that the prices will go up still higher; but this, he remarks, can scarcely be hoped for, "very high prices are almost as bad as very low ones;"

they cause unnatural excitement, which is certain to be followed by a reaction, the more rapid and disastrous that the former was intense." For the purpose of supporting the opinion that the supply of copper is falling off, it has been remarked that the quantity of ore sold in Cornwall in the last quarter of 1856 is smaller by 3,658 tons than the quantity sold in the last quarter of 1855, and it is even seriously added that this fact alone is sufficient to account for the present high standard. But Mr. Murchison says that the quantity of ore affords no such criterion, without reference to its produce or richness—the quantity of fine metal it contains. It so happens that in this case the average produce of the smaller quantity sold in 1856 is fully 1 per cent. higher than that of the larger quantity sold in 1855, and that the quantity of fine copper is really larger in the former than in the latter. The argument of diminished supplies is not, therefore, founded on fact. But as has been observed already, a very high price for copper would eventually be as injurious to the miner as a very low one, and there does not appear much probability of the supply being lessened. It will be seen that the copper mines of Cornwall and Devon yielded 952 tons of fine copper (worth upwards of £100,000) more in 1856 than they did in 1855, and for the future there is every probability that the young mines about to start into a profitable state, will make up for any deficiency in the older concerns. The following are the particulars of the sales of copper ores in Cornwall during the quarters ending 31st December, 30th September, 30th June, and 31st March, 1856 and 1855, respectively:—

December 31, 1856, tons 45,391; average produce, 6.827; amount, £316,390 1s. 4d.; average per ton, £6 11s. 11d.; fine copper, 3,247 tons 6 cwt.  
September 30, 1856, tons 49,636; average produce, 6.976; amount, £339,273 16s. 4d.; average per ton, £6 17s. 3d.; fine copper, 3,455 tons 18 cwt.  
June 30, 1856, tons 49,106; average produce, 6.311; amount, £308,638 18s. 4d.; average per ton, £6 13s. 8d.; fine copper, 3,427 tons 13 cwt.  
March 31, 1856, tons 53,934; average produce, 6.917; amount, £371,397 17s. 6d.; average per ton, £6 17s. 6d.; fine copper, 3,538 tons 9 cwt.  
December 31, 1855, tons 51,992; average produce, 6.319; amount, £324,744 15s. 4d.; average per ton, £6 11s. 11d.; fine copper, 3,251 tons 15 cwt.  
September 30, 1855, tons 49,106; average produce, 6.372; amount, £312,932 18s. 4d.; average per ton, £6 10s. 7d.; fine copper, 3,203 tons 17 cwt.  
June 30, 1855, tons 48,249; average produce, 6.522; amount, £315,506 10s. 6d.; average per ton, £6 12s. 2d.; fine copper, 3,215 tons 4 cwt.  
March 31, 1855, tons 45,419; average produce, 6.379; amount, £287,055 2s. 1d.; average per ton, £6 3s. 2d.; fine copper, 2,993 tons 11 cwt.

These figures show that in the past quarter the quantity of ore has decreased 1302 tons under the previous quarter, and 3658 tons under the corresponding quarter of 1855; the produce has decreased 149 under the previous quarter, and increased 508 over 1855; the amount has increased £108,725 5s. over the previous quarter, and decreased £2445 14s. under 1855; the price per ton has increased 10s. 6d. over the previous quarter, and 6s. 1d. over 1855; and the quantity of fine copper has decreased 168 tons 12 cwt. under the previous quarter, and increased 2 tons 11 cwt. over 1855. The following are the totals and averages for the years 1856 and 1855 respectively:—

1856—Tons, 206,177; average produce, 6.533; amount, £1,341,844 12s. 6d.; average per ton, £6 5s. 5d.; fine copper, 13,329 tons 6 cwt.  
1855—Tons, 195,192; average produce, 6.416; amount, £1,263,739 6s. 6d.; average per ton, £6 5s. 5d.; fine copper, 12,777 tons 7 cwt.  
Increase in 1856—Tons, 10,985; average produce, 1.17; fine copper, 551 tons 19 cwt.  
Decrease in 1856—Amount, £21,904 11s.; average per ton, 9s.  
The following are the sales of British and Irish copper ores at Swansea in the years 1856 and 1855 respectively:—1856, Irish, 11,710 tons, £114,512 0s. 6d.; 1855, ditto, 12,131 tons, £121,775 16s. 4d.; British, 280 tons, £1559 6s. 6d.; 1855, ditto, 294 tons, £1903 11s. 6d. In 1855 the total amount of dividends paid by British and Irish mines was £338,956. The accompanying table shows that the amount paid in 1856 is £193,164, or an increase of £50,208 in the latter year. These amounts may be thus classified:—1856—English £387,339, Welsh £19,585, Irish £18,440, Isle of Man £13,800; total £439,164. 1855—English £310,500, Welsh £7535, Irish £29,660, Isle of Man £11,444, Scotch £117; total £389,566. Increase in 1856—English £16,839, Welsh £12,050, Isle of Man £22656; total £50,208. Decrease—Irish £11,220, Scotch £117.

The following analysis will show the relative amounts paid by the mines of the different denominations of metals:—1856: Copper £323,972; copper and tin, £14,997; lead, £69,991; tin, £30,304; total, £439,164. 1855: copper, £234,135; copper and tin, £13,314; lead, £39,616; tin, £13,891; total, £328,956. Increase in 1856: copper and tin, £23,683; lead, £30,375; tin, £16,413; total, £50,208. Decrease: copper, £23,683.

It will be seen, therefore, that the chief increase is in the lead mines, then the tin, and the copper and tin, while there is a trifling decrease on the copper mines.—*Morning Chronicle* January 9.

## HOME CONVICTISM.

(From the Morning Chronicle, 13th January.)

THE Ticket-of-Leave system is clearly not to be settled by figures. For such a settlement—even if it were possible upon principle—the basis is altogether wanting. No two authorities can be brought into agreement as to the arithmetical data of the problem. Colonel Jebb, who has again come forward in defence of his favourite system, declares that out of the gross number of convicts manumitted with tickets-of-leave, scarcely 1 per cent. have been detected in new crimes. Other explorers in the same branch of investigation, but with different prepossessions, multiply that per centage by ten, or more. Country magistrates assure us that multitudes of prisoners are periodically brought up in custody who conceal this fact in their biography, and whose identification as "ticket" holders must be a mere matter of chance. And amidst this conflict of assertion and of fact and figures, the public mind has absorbed an impression that of the strangely augmented number of burglaries and robberies with violence lately experienced, by far the larger proportion are either perpetrated by committed or actively guided and prompted by "ticket-of-leave men."

So far as the past and present state of things is concerned, a considerable misapprehension prevails, which it would be well to remove. Wretched magistrates, and even learned judges on the bench, speak of the ticket system in terms which seem to display either a deplorable ignorance or complete forgetfulness of the actual practice in this respect. Led away by natural indignation at finding new atrocities committed by offenders who would, but for the privileges accorded by tickets-of-leave, have been still in prison for former crimes, these judicial personages launch forth in indignant protests against the system, and treat it as an experiment which the Executive

are still determined to prosecute, in spite of the most flagrant proof of failure.

Quite otherwise are the real facts. The system is now thoroughly and definitively abandoned. No prisoner committed during the last two years or more has received, or will receive, premature emancipation with a ticket-of-leave. No attempt will be made to continue the practice. The specimens of the class which now emerge into public view, or contribute to enhance the public feeling of insecurity, belong to an earlier formation. It is a crop sprung up from seed sown many years ago. There is no fresh tith in that field. But meanwhile the product has become somewhat exuberant, and the harvest is both superabundant and unwholesome. Yet, while we cannot conceal our dislike at the existing evils, it would display either ignorance or unfairness to argue concerning them as if they were permanent and reproductive, instead of being the temporary products of an existing system.

While transportation was a reality and not a name, the recognised principle of operation was that every convict sentenced to a definite term of punishment was practically liberated, if he behaved well, when something like half the period of nominal restraint had elapsed, and set free to seek his fortune among the colonial population in which he was located, with no other restriction to his independence than a prohibition against returning to England until his full term of exile had been accomplished. This practice was observed for some generations, with tolerably successful results both to the free colonists, and the transported convicts. Presently a time arrived when, from totally different reasons than the failure of our own criminal system, it became impossible to send our culprits, as a general principle, to a colonial dependency. The outlet was stopped up. No colony would accept the off-scourings of British criminality—and we gave to every colonial community, almost without exception, the right of refusal. Thus we were compelled to replace transportation abroad by imprisonment at home, varied into different shapes of what is now termed "penal servitude." But the executive administrators of the law, if compelled to change the plan and mode of detention for convicted offenders, did not think themselves justified in altering also the conditions and terms of punishment. Judges, it was argued, had passed sentences of transportation, under the belief that the real effect of their adjudication would be limited to a few years actual servitude, followed, except in case of renewed misbehaviour, by practical liberty and a fair opportunity for securing an honourable subsistence in the colony to which the culprits were consigned.

These culprits, when every outlet for transportation was shut, were necessarily retained at home. But the judicial authorities still believed that the old conditions of their sentence should be fulfilled, so far, at all events, as related to the practical liberation of the convicts, after a certain time, with tickets-of-leave. The privileges were granted them, as we believe, under a somewhat overstrained interpretation of the contract entered into by the legal tribunals with the criminal convicts. Under that impression, at all events, the prisoners whom it was found impossible to transport, were cast loose among our domestic community at the same time, and under the same conditions as if they had undergone a forced emigration to Western Australia or Van Diemen's Land. The result has proved eminently disastrous. Our home resources and avenues for competing labour are far too restricted to afford anything like a fair chance to the "ticket-of-leave" holder. We cannot ensure employment to the discharged convict while so many individuals of untarnished character are seeking for employment which they cannot obtain. The condition of a convict set free in Sydney with that of one just allowed exit from an English prison is painfully different. In one case the colonial community welcome an addition to their stores of available labour. In the other, the quondam prisoner finds it almost impossible to earn a subsistence by honest industry, and is himself too often driven back upon his old nefarious practices to obtain bare means of living, while the society around him complain bitterly of this new accession to the already formidable array of the dangerous classes.

## REVIEW OF THE WOOL MARKET FOR 1856.

(From the Bradford Observer, January 1.)

The year 1856 will hardly be ranked by any future chronicler of local changes as a year of extraordinary progress and large profits, in connection with the wool trade of this district. Those who have perused the reports we have published from week to week of the state of our markets, will, like ourselves, have been struck with the monotonous and tame tone which those reports have almost uniformly breathed, and will doubtless prefer that we avoid a needless reiteration of the often-told tale of gloomy markets and an unremunerative trade. In the face, however, of all murmurs and complaints, the various descriptions of wool available for our manufacturers have, for a series of months, been manifesting an upward tendency. During the year which has just closed, the advance realized upon some varieties of wool has been so enormous, that we number no parallel to it throughout the last twenty years. The anomaly is the more striking, because it has taken place notwithstanding a stringent money market and the checks which it imposes. It is somewhat remarkable, too, that for more than a year past, with one brief exception, the rate of discount has ruled at a figure which has heretofore been deemed incompatible with a steady trade and rising prices. Yet, strange as may seem, the prices of wool in 1856 have been the highest since 1846, and the only period when they suffered a decline was exactly at the time when the money market exhibited the greatest ease, and gave the strongest assurance of a permanently reduced range of discounts. The price of wool has thus followed the value of money, not as formerly, by falling as it advanced, and rising as it fell, but by falling and advancing with it.

For a series of years there has been an enlargement of consuming power, in the accelerated speed of machinery, and the general extension of it, which has been compensated for by an increase which has taken place in the colonies or elsewhere in the quantity of wool produced. In other words, machinery has extended and been improved faster than sheep have multiplied. These remarks are applicable, not alone to the experience of our own country, but also to that of a large portion of the continent of Europe. Manufactures seem to be spreading with greater rapidity in France, Belgium, and Germany, than in England, and the manufacturers of those countries not only consume an immense portion of the raw material which in former years was sent to the market, but are also formidable competitors with the English in the wool market. It is true, indeed, that the exports of wool from England during 1856 have suffered a rather less augmentation than in 1855, but this arises rather from the largeness of the quantities exported in 1855, than from the smallness of the exports of 1856. There has, in fact, been no year so far as we remember, or are able to discover, in which the exports of wool from this country at all approach those of the year just closed, if we except 1867. From the colonies we obtain an increasing quantity from year to year; but since the gold discoveries, the rate of increase has fallen off, and probably nothing but high prices will be able to keep it at its present mark. Germany was wanted on the continent, and to a large extent kept there. From other parts our leading manufactures cannot be largely supplied with the descriptions they require. Our recent experience proves that war is an immense consumer of wool, and if of many of those products which are manufactured from it; and if its effects be to lessen the demand, ordinarily existing for the benefit of civilians, it yields a somewhat liberal compensation for a vastly enlarged demand on behalf of the army and navy. Hence, although at the commencement of the late war, gloomy forebodings were

naturally generated by the unavoidable curtailing of certain branches of commerce, it was soon discovered that an immense weight of wool would be swallowed up in providing the warm clothing indispensable to large armies, living for months together in camps and trenches, without any shelter, save what was provided by the manufacturers of their native land. The result was that, when the first indications of approaching peace became apparent, less than a year ago, notwithstanding the extent to which the war had distracted and disorganised the ordinary commerce of the world, wool was threatening to become a scarce commodity, and rapidly advancing in price.

While we admit there is a considerable annual increase in the quantity of wool produced, we maintain that that increase is not commensurate with the augmented demand, which from year to year has been going on for it in the various markets of the world. And, although some events have occurred, even within the last few years, which, their effect has been to retard, rather than destroy, the influence which an expanding commerce naturally produces upon the wool market, we are convinced that our remarks may be controverted by an argument drawn from a comparison of the two last years' imports and exports of wool. It cannot be denied, that the returns of the Board of Trade show that the augmented imports and exports of 1855, as compared with 1856, leave a much larger quantity of wool available for home use in the more recent of the two years, than in the predecessor. This, however, arises rather from the exceptional character of the imports and exports of 1855, than from the plenitude of recent supplies. The imports of 1855 were unusually light—the exports were unusually heavy; and it is to the enormous drain upon the wool market, to which the latter circumstance may be attributed, that we are to ascribe the fact that our present high prices are largely to be attributed. A comparison of the aggregate supplies of the last two years with those of the two years preceding them will probably tend to prevent an erroneous value from being attached to the figures referred to by those who may have compared them with those of 1855 and no other:—

1853 and 1854.	1855 and 1856.
Aggregate Imports 176,914,128 lbs.	Aggregate Imports 171,937,295 lbs.
Aggregate Exports 127,711,490 lbs.	Aggregate Exports 127,711,490 lbs.
Available for home consumption, 1853 and 1854 149,202,638 lbs.	Available for home consumption, 1855 and 1856 144,225,805 lbs.

Difference in favour of the two former years 4,976,833 lbs. (As shown we have in our possession the returns only for the first ten months of 1856, we have taken 12½ months period for each of the other years.)

Assuming that the clip of English wool has not varied in quantity for the last four years, the above table proves that in the years 1853 and 1854 the supply of wool of all classes, available for home consumption, was more by 33,490,226 lbs. than in 1855 and 1856. In other words, the quantity in round numbers left for the use of British manufacturers, has been less by 33,490,226 lbs. in the two latter years, than in the two former years. With these figures before us, we cease to wonder at light stocks and rising prices, and see no reason to look for a permanent return of low prices, until some event transpires, by which commerce will receive a heavy check, causing a temporary contraction of trade, and necessary stopping of spindles.

We have already referred to the extraordinary advance which has taken place in wool during the last year. For the first four months of 1856 the advance was almost continuous. During the same period there was a considerable retrogression in prices, produced, doubtless, by the willingness of the growers of English, and the importers of colonial, to sell freely at the rates offered. In the autumn, however, an upward tendency was again apparent, which has continued to various rates of progress until within the last few days. At the present moment prices rule at a high figure, namely 20 to 30 per cent. than they did a year ago; the advance varying according to the nature and extent of the description sought. The advance has been the greatest upon deep-stapled English wool, particularly such as is required for lustre goods, some varieties of which are found to be extremely scarce. A reference to the following table of exports will show the demand for English wool for foreign account has, during the last two years, been so much in excess of the supply, that, arguing from that fact alone, it would have been a marvel, were there not a place a considerable rise in the value of a commodity thus increasingly in request:—

Exports of British wool during the years 1855 and 1856	1853 and 1854	1855 and 1856	1853 and 1854	1855 and 1856
Ditto ditto	1853 and 1854	1855 and 1856	1853 and 1854	1855 and 1856

(As in the former instance, we have given the exports for the first ten months only of each year.)

Assuming that the returns for the last two months did not materially alter our calculation, it is apparent that above 46,000 packs of English wool were exported during the last two years, more than during the two years that immediately preceded them. We are now, therefore, suffering the consequences of a heavy constitutional drain, which has been going on for two consecutive years, in addition to the heavy drain which may have taken place at home, during the same period. In the absence of all reliable statistics regarding the production of English wool, it is, of course, impossible to affirm that the above figures have given us a correct indication of the relative supply and demand for home use, during the periods to which we have referred. We presume, however, that no wool grower will maintain that, since the commencement of 1853, there has been a decrease in the quantity of clip of English wool that can at all make up for the increased exportation of it. If we admit that wool, like all other descriptions of agricultural produce in this country, must increase in quantity in proportion to the increase in demand, and that we have no abundant crops secured, we are only allowing an increase which must necessarily be slow, and one which will require a long series of years for any marked development. Under these circumstances, we are compelled to believe, that the figures we have given are undeniably evidence of a severe diminution of the quantity of wool usually available for the necessities of trade; and we see no reason to suppose, that any extension in growth, which is possible in this country for many years to come, will allow the recent rate of exportation of English wool to be continued, without either forcing a curtailment of consumption here, or permanently maintaining a higher value for it than any to which we have been accustomed for many years past.

The facts given prove that the late upward tendency in prices is chiefly attributable to diminished stocks, and it is so attributable; we nevertheless doubt whether the actual advance has not been exaggerated by speculative purchasers on the part of the more sanguine spirits of the trade. It is always easy for a few expert operators to produce an impression upon a sensitive market, and to raise prices above their proper level. It is not impossible that a result has recently taken place; and, if so, we shall not be surprised, notwithstanding all we have said, if prices to some extent recede when stocks, now held back, are freely thrown upon the market. Whether or not, all former experience furnishes this lesson to the trader—that they who, as a rule, work their business with the lightest stocks are likely to pass the least injury through any ordeal which prospect prices sooner or later render unavoidable.

Looking back then upon the past year as a whole, it has been one of a large and profitable business. The present year opens with prospects at least as favourable, and we can offer our readers no better wish than that 1857 may prove as good as the years 1855 and 1856.

A NICE LEGAL QUESTION.—The Melbourne Herald of the 16th instant says:—A rather singular case is likely shortly to afford employment for the gentlemen of the long robe. About seventeen years since a party mortgaged a property in Bourke-street for £1000, the mortgagor who negotiated the mortgage, and who pocketed the money, and his principal, a friend of course bound by the act of his agent, was compelled in consequence to seek the protection of the Insolvent Court. The official assignee to his estate considering the same time liquidated or compromised every debt in his schedule excepting this item of £1000. About two years since he died, leaving a widow, to whom he had been married but a short time previously, and she has since married a person learned in the law, who being apprised of the circumstances of the case, and that the property was now worth about £2000, and that the mortgagee, who is a member of the Legislative Assembly, the £1000 mortgage money and interest, at the same time demanding an account of rents and profits received from the property since the date of the mortgage, which it is presumed, in consequence of the enormous advance of late years in rents, amount to considerably more than the principal and interest on the mortgage money. The M.L.A. was staggered, and politely declined to comply with the demand. The bill consulted the solicitor. Thus the matter at present rests.







**MERCANTILE AND MONEY ARTICLES**

**Tuesday Evening**

**Tax return of the Customs' revenue for port of Sydney, from the 23rd to the 31st March, is as follows:—**

Spirits	£7330	0	0
Wine	100	0	0
Tea, tobacco, and beer, of all sorts	230	15	0
Tobacco, cigars, and snuff	200	10	0
Alcohol	300	11	0
Other liquors	107	7	10
Coffee and molasses	365	8	0
Rubber and resins			
	<b>£11,533</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>0</b>

The revenue received during the month of March was £40,276 16s. 4d. During the month of 1856 £92,801 5s. 3d, showing an increase of £7475 11s. 1d.

The Customs revenue for the port of Sydney during the quarter ended (to-day) March amounts to £130,985 1s. 2d. During the corresponding quarter of 1856 the revenue £98,403 3s. 7d. There is, therefore, an increase of £32,581 17s. 7d. on the quarter, or nearly

	1856.	1857.
January	\$21,302 4 2	\$24,287 18
February	31,000 4 2	45,820 5

It will be observed that the lowest amount received in January, 1856, and in March 1857. The highest during February of year.

The amount of gold-dust delivered by escorts from our gold-fields during the quarter ended the 31st of March has been 33,870 14 dwts. 18 grs. This is a great falling off the yield of our gold-fields, when compared with the return for the last quarter 1856, and which was 67,517 ounces. The quantity received during the first or corresponding quarter of the year 1856 was 21,827 oz.

on the same quarter of 12,043 ounces 6 dwts. 7 grains. There is therefore an increase of 12,043 ounces 6 dwts. 7 grains, or about 51 per cent. It was observed last year that during the first quarter the same quantity of gold was received, and that on succeeding quarter there was an increase, therefore very probable that the same thing occurs this year. The total amount received during the year 1856 was 138,823 ounces, the

fore, without being too sanguine, it may be  
 expected, (as this quarter's return, which is al-  
 the worst, and if the returns of the success-  
 quarters were the same, would average no-  
 the amount specified), that there will be a  
 considerable increase on the amount of gold  
 received during the present year.  
 The following table will show the amount  
 delivered by each escort during the several mo-  
 of the quarter ending the 31st March, 1856  
 1857 :—

[illegible]

February...	5,787	14	33	1,106	14	11	4,361	13
March...	5,853	13	12	1,180	0	0	2,474	4
	21,008	16	17	5,530	12	30	8,144	5
Western	...	...	...	...	...	...	21,008	16 17
Southern	...	...	...	...	...	...	5,530	12 30
Northern	...	...	...	...	...	...	8,144	5 4
Total	...	...	...	...	...	...	33,679	31 19

The amount of gold-dust sent down the

The arrivals-to-day are the Asa Packer, Calcutta, 3000 bags rice; Horizont, from Hongkong, 3325 packages tea, 9763 bags suet; Mary Nicholson, from Melbourne, 1777 sugar.

Messrs. Mort and Co. sold to-day, by auction, the following valuable properties. The attendance was large and represented capital. There was throughout the sale a decided disposition to buy at the market value, that is, with a view

a fair return for the investment. Ingle House and grounds, 198 feet frontage on George-street, Balmain, by a depth of 178 feet, realised, after considerable competition, £1,100. Mr. James Geord was the purchaser. A block of land at Concord at the rear of Mr. J. J. Geord's property was sold for £1,100.

Block of land in William-street, Woodmooloo, nearly opposite Forbes-street, 500 feet 8 inches frontage, to Mr. Benjamin James £15 10s. per foot, or £785 8s. 8d. The following properties were offered, but withdrawn at higher prices: block of land, with frontage to Dowling Wharf and Duke-street, upon a reserved road, was sold to Mr. Dunsen solicitor, at 12s. 6d. per foot, or £1200.

are the Dowling Wharf Hotel and a two-brick house—£2550 offered. Block of Dowling street, adjoining Neale's large house, £9 10s. per foot offered. Twenty years' of cottage and garden, Darling Point, subject yearly ground rent, £550 offered. 51 road 24 perches Silex Estate, North 8

The remainder of the cargo of the *Jacques Langlois* was sold to-day by Messrs. Bosc and Threlkeld. The bidding was brisk, and following prices were obtained:—

Cheese, 94d to 10d per lb; capers, 10s 6d per dozen; 11d per lb.; sperm candles, 1s 3d to 1s 4d (in small quantities limited portion only sold, the balance passed at 1s 4d); sperm stearine candles, at 1s 2d per lb.; German candles, 1s 0d per packet; muscatels, 6d per lb.; olive oil, pint to 11s 6d, half-pints at 7s 3d to 7s 4d per dozen; canary sugar per lb.; Mauritius sugar, ex Monarch, crystals, at 24s light counter, 24s 10s to 24s per ton; dark Mauritius, at 24s 6s to 24s 10s per ton.

At Messrs. Burgis and Bowes' sale of land Monday, at Kissing Point, the following were realized:—

House and one acre of land, \$305; uncultivated farm, at Kissing Point, at \$7 7s 6d per acre; small farm, at \$3 3s 6d per acre; 10 acres ditto; cottage, and 10 acres of land.

**IMPOUNDINGS.**  
GUNDAGAL.—15th March: Bay mare, black points, D' shoulder, WC off shoulder. Chestnut horse, W over 8 near der, hind fetlock white. Bay mare star and snip, two h locks white, — over B near shoulder, 9 near lock. Black GB over TE near shoulder, shod on fore legs. Brown dilly

down face PM near shoulder. Bay filly, blaze on face, like PM on near shoulder. Brown horse, star, like across F off shoulder. Strawberry bullock, MB over M2 off rump advertised. To be sold on 15th April.

JAEVY'S PLATINA.—8th March: Sheeted sided heifer, r and ears, off ear split, illegible brand off ribs. To be sold on 13th April.

KILBO.—12th March: Strawberry bullock, near ear split, near ribs, WL near rump, and apparent SK off rump.

bullock, red spots on neck, TK on rump and ribs. Black  
near hind foot white. H off shoulder, collar marked.  
mare, near shoulder MC, off shoulder SC with apparently  
and 1 under. To be sold on 4th March.

**DUNGOO POTEN.**—30th March: from Conbank Station,  
A. Hook. Red working bullock, branded WM with T on  
rump. Red and white spotted working bullock, branded T  
shoulder half moon near ribs. Damagun 1/2 each. Also,  
same day, by Mr. Benjamin Marsh, from Thabatha Estate.

horns, banded B near shoulder, white blaze on head, v  
near hind leg, low backed, appears lame, cut tail, broken  
saddle, 3 years old, 15 hands high. Bay filly, white on  
fetlocks, branded F off shoulder, appears about 2 years  
hands high. Bay colt, white star, white on both hind is  
near fore fetlock, branded MF conjoined near shoulder,  
old. Brown mule, branded C with dot in centre near saddle  
No. 95 off ribs; trespass \$5. per head. Will be sold  
April

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